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Summary:

(July 22, 2003)-Does your spine tingle at a good mystery? Does your heart sing during a musical comedy? For the best of both worlds, how about a spine-tingling, heart-singing, "solve-it-yourself" murder mystery music hall comedy that's fun for the whole family?!

"The Mystery of Edwin Drood," a musical adaptation by Rupert Holmes of Charles Dickens' final novel, will open the 2003-2004 play performance season at the University of Minnesota, Morris. Audiences will experience a superior blend of music and drama in this unique collaboration between the UMM theater and music disciplines. The play is directed by Ray Schultz, with set and lighting design by Tap R. Payne, both of the UMM theater faculty. Musical direction will be offered by Hope Koehler of the UMM music discipline. The orchestra will be conducted by UMM music faculty member, Clifford Pantan, Jr.

Performances are set for Wednesday through Saturday, Nov. 5-8, in the Proscenium Theatre of Humanities Fine Arts on the Morris campus. Performances will begin at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday through Friday, and at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. on Saturday.

If your group or organization is planning now to attend upcoming events and activities together, add this performance to your calendar. Special group rates will be offered for groups of 10 or more at \$7 per ticket for adults and \$5 per ticket for students and senior citizens. In order to take advantage of this discount offering, tickets for "Drood" must be ordered in advance. Contact Ray Schultz at (320) 589-6267 or e-mail schultzr@mrs.umn.edu.

"The Mystery of Edwin Drood," originally produced by Joe Papp's New York Public Theatre in Central Park in the summer of 1985, starred Betty Buckley, George Rose, and legendary jazz great Cleo Laine. A critical and popular hit, it subsequently transferred to Broadway and went on to win five Tony Awards, including Best Musical and Best Score. It has since been produced by professional and amateur companies all over the country and around the world.

The appeal of "Drood" rests in its interactive nature. The events of Dickens' novel are placed in the context of a British Music Hall, complete with wonderfully rousing song and dance numbers and classic comedy routines. What's more, highlighting the "unfinished" nature of Dickens' final work, the audience is invited to participate in the outcome of the musical's plot. At each performance the audience is invited to vote on several key plot elements, including the identity of Edwin Drood's killer. Depending on how the audience votes, over a dozen different outcomes are possible, which promises an evening in the theater filled with fun, mystery, and unexpected surprises. Repeat customers to "Drood" experience a unique treat: virtually a new outcome each night!

Your performance experience will be twice as fun when you attend with a group: solve the mystery with your friends and vote as a team! To encourage your senior, school, church or civic group to plan an outing to "The Mystery of Edwin Drood," discount rates are available for groups of 10 or more.

This wonderful evening of music, comedy, and mystery is the perfect group outing for the Halloween season. Come join in the fun November 5-8, and help solve “The Mystery of Edwin Drood.”

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.